

Flourescence

Is it dark you say?
As optic anonymity:
Flourite ducats, cubed on black,
Retinitis burning violet.

Spectrum prisms blue reverse;
Nothing stands a monument.

For edging passage to descent,
Gather spleen and testify:
Here's epithets for epitaphs.
Are you answered yet?

(10-14-74)

Trace

Rain swamps walkways
And earthworms row
Afloat in lust.
Like twisting spirochetes
Tiding into Charon's
Wake, a burning shade,
They swim obscene.

Through rainbow lens
Apollo blots
Censoriously.
Quick mopping up ensues;
Laundered sterility
Bends withered pretzel
Petroglyphics.

(10-16-74)

Economy

Support goes not by parity;
The price off course is never right.

Trees dip and raise themselves in debt
To the black wind, profit taking.

What capital offense
To merchandise the self,
Greening into yellow
Yield of dessication.

Banked leaf on leaf, the board reserves
Its dividends of unreturn.

Yet take stock of grace: what ratio,
There, preserves the price of yearning?

(12-11-74)

Tip

Something's got to give
To ties that bind
Their yielding tithes.
Mind's treasury:

Encapsulated
Sounds hold silver;
Word notes melting
Mint true to meant:

Such spacious increments
Outfunding time's
Gratuitous
Gratuities.

(1-8-75)

Unnameable

Assertion,
recalcitrant,
allows mind manifold
order:
Nevertheless still:
Periphery

of events

Treasurable.

(11-11-74)

Medusa

Subtle down
To where the worm
Of intellect
Turns out.

(12-19-74)

I hope to turn again to Bushwacher Falls,
the lichen on trees like pencils
back with rain from righteous erect
pines,
echoes black of water below on clay;
to pull up from the lacy hem
and ask why squirrels crawl into telephone
fuse boxes, their eyes callow and open;
I will uproot rain,
and carry it holy to stream
down over the tired altar,
a joint across two distinct banks
and moving creek;
to chant the text of questions
hovering light,
methodical orders
unforeseen in slow sloping drizzle.

Doug Abrams

Persecution

days speak:
teaching years
of wisdom:
declaration's leaves,
hard as down,
cast about their thinly iced
ivy; their bones sing
in a vision,
light with a light
seen; requite the tenuous
bones drawn
as mosaic, horizontal, cleft
in irregular ruts

Doug Abrams

Imitation

Sometimes folks make me
one of the best guards in B-Ball
I can't play that game
I hit golf balls
during tryouts in Jr. Hi
I was the only one cut after the
first half
of practice, now I'm a star
while walking
some folks greet me
Hi "Skip"
I speak, smile, and walk; can't
hurt his image
a kid asked for an autograph
couldn't hurt his feelings...
so...
Best wishes "Skip" I wrote
he smiled
A Dean asked me "how will the
season be"
"Oh fine . . . goodbye
but he asked for more
I couldn't embarrass him.
An African said Clef and Skep
sound alike
sure they do
even a black lady
wanted to know was I "Skip"
"No I'm not"
I'm not "Skip"
I'm Clef I mean Cliff

Clifford Robinson

Patterns

You're no longer
The highlight of the evening,
Insecurity is waiting
Backstage
To give you a withered bouquet.
And tell you of the great
performance.

You're no longer
Speeding faster than you thought
Reason steps in
To congratulate you--
"When is the next race?"

Lying and running
From the truth--
You move on,
Another show,
Another race,
Shaking off
Bittersweet reality--

Finding yourself
Dirty and disgusting
Time and time
Again.

Horace Crump

Piece

A passing eye-blinker
says "I hope it snows up to my ass"
as a policeman inspects a
broken window: at 11:50 the first-floor
shops of the dorms
exchange visitors, shallow tracks
are made less visible
as the clock in its tower
continues. Baseball players make
their weapons, Judy's friend
says "Hello John" and
sha-mash! a post-office window
falls in: a policeman
frowns as I walk to my room
with slivers in my head;

From a Space-Station of the Martian
Patrol

studying in the library, I was
sitting about twenty feet from a model
of the earth
when the room darkened, there was
blackness! except for the moon
on one hand and the sun
on the other,
and I was hovering above a
cloudy planet, drifting . . .
And, after tumbling
over endless dreams, I found
the globe getting closer, twirling
toward me, I breathed again,
saw the sun, an
orange curve, screamed and
flashed: I woke up on a beach
under palm trees when
a small, dark girl scooped me
up with her
bucket and took me to her castle.

Lunacy

the moon
was diffused by a sheet, a cloud
perhaps, but I do not
remember; the fingers
of cannabis sativa slid into my
nostrils and ears,
and I felt a breast,
my own, for you were not
with me, dear girl, and my
dog did a
simple, long
yodel:
cellos, I heard cellos
over-amplified
(and my sister snoring):
in stinging perspiration I
surfaced, took your hand and
tore a poster! Last night I
saw your younger sister, the one whose
lips are like yours,
and wondered
why am I loving no one

Balancing on Stones

Perhaps the light bending
in the wheat
or the pale undersides of
summer leaves
filled up the old silences
between us.

We found our way easy,
across small streams,
walking in field daisies,
naming birds.

Then we came to the place
no human talk
makes sound without pushing
beyond the limits
to where pain lies, dark
as the creek banks,
pushing from a darker source,
washing upon us,
adrift, frightened, quick,
balancing on stones.

A Child Cries at Night

Old fire settles in the grate.
The dark smells earthen and cold.
Your little cries are under covers;
your nightmare flares into the night.

On Sligo Bay a buoy slides
over the world, belling the beast
who whines and blows; you hold your breath
to listen, locked into the rocking.

Past window and farm, riggings,
and cloudful hour, night rides you,
over and over.

Resolution

I am going to begin now
with the way light fails

to hold the sky, with the
brown dry leaves, still,

without speech. And watch
the day end in this faded

far corner of my life,
when time gnaws at the bark

of carved branches. There
is so little to do:

I cannot dress the oak
again, stir up the heat

of the rich decay of leaves
and return each to a thin

connection with the trees.
I will not argue with the

energy of creek currents.
Nor make conversation with

the criss-crossings of
bramble and bush.

The sky hangs over me
with a blank indifference

for the coming dark.
My bones are stiff, and

my words ache to be delivered.
If I could make my song heard

in the windless hollows,
I would praise man

and my arms would float from me
and touch the sky in a calm victory.

No

The bones in the face
show death
as
the eyes darken
and go out.

Elizabeth Phillips

Infraction

Keep out began all knowing
How standing here advances
Inevitable returns
Of metaphysic belly-ache.

Omniscient genesis is sure
Not to err by trial, but
Judges out the way to go
At giving intellect its breaks.

After all prohibition
Opens possibility;
Lots of do and die are cast
By elemental pruning down.

Paring through releases limits
So poise is made uneasy;
Peril is the whole shebang
Fiddle-faddling orchestration.

Soundable extensions gape
Where branches reach like crazy;
Not by note the mind conducts
Its slope down edgy balance beams.

You must admit at bottom that
A tilt toward apprehending
Ours mind to quick undoing;
Hell alone keeps scores of wisdom.

D. R. Fosso

Hospitality

the body inch for inch adequate to
the condition mind can do nothing with,

I walk home for lunch by workmen wolfing
theirs down, hunched over in car after car,

while a receptionist, elsewhere, knocks once,
is received, head to the floor, dead, a pause

in the hall, a man in the adjoining
office, relatives in another state:

who then thinks to reach to haul up the slack?
and what tissue taut with relation bears

weight or looking at? and if she knocks twice,
then on a door to what room who foresees

the dimensions off? nobody hears her,
of course, the noise is overwhelming,

everyone pulls over to a full stop,
bending baffled ear to baffling heart

Michael Roman

Sleet on the Sundeck

light gathers around the edges
the oak stands old
sighting the sun by the porch flange;
mountain thrush chase grit cereal
bloated as if drowned
the re-icing veneered the grain
pits;
beaks twitch, throttle the seed;
the tree shades them, limpid,
open to the wind

Doug Abrams

I went to the city and entered the tabernacle;
my supplications twilled the walls;
words assumed shape, but though I
girded them and measured them, they
would not yield into easy combination;
essences hid in the high manifolds and would
not relinquish their disparity; So I
withed the inviolate forms, leaving
diverse strands to summon
from the evanescent shadow, clear natures

Doug Abrams

Images from the Evening News

To re-establish the species,
We demonstrate this structural principle:
Beneath your wool, enlaced and costly breast-line,
Feel, like the princess's pea, your ribs
Banding over the faint beat.
Likewise, in this coffee-colored mother,
The sternum floats on the spit of ribs
Above the heart, which we cannot show you,
That is the point of resemblance.
Now the dugs, like a broken promise,
Above the open and fly-blown mouth,
And the lap, concave and stalky,
That balances the bony child,
Can bear no likeness.

Dillon Johnston

the only way to write
is to write right away
when it feels right to write
right? write.

Bill Hinman

If a tree frog hogged a free log
which a he-dog thought a pee-log,
would the tree frog leave the log free
so the dog could take his tree pee?

Bill Hinman

Hanging Loose

I carry no promises,
No bargains,
No dreams,
Only me.

You may rave,
Curse, and scream,
But
I carry no promises--
Only me.

Horace Crump

Summertime

We had to chop up
The three plum trees out back
This winter.
Children sho gonna miss'm
When Spring comes around...
But cha know--
When that cold wind
Starts to bitin' ya rump,
You have a way
Of forgetting
Those pretty blossoms
And plums
Of Summer.

Horace Crump

Marks

So mingled in willows I bend
To spectral rue! the sceptered rain!
Charged insistence of tyrannied exclamations!
Slopes marked down to pointed descent!

Preferred is winter sweet-gum bough
Suspending dots . . the dangled waits,
Wholenesses pointing . . round periodicities,
Holds spading out snow-full . . . extent.

D. R. Fosso

Deferred

Once upon recessionary heights
Splendid yellow sigh at mind-set
Evened layers over runes
Where dappled crowds depopulated
Last dim trailings of surmise and
Black-haired gorgons refracted
Crystal splinters into dark
Officiating by appointment to
Regally vaporous vastidity:
Vacuum-packed is romance--
Market dividends deferred.

D. R. Fosso

PUT ANOTHER NICKEL IN

A Review

A new publication, dittoed and selling for 5 cents a piece, has appeared under the editorship of one A. R. Ammons and if the change in the cup is any indication of its success, "The Nickelodeon" is on its way to literary history. That, however, is clearly not the intent. Looking over the first seven numbers (and they continue to appear like topsy), one senses a generosity at work among the poets, their readers, and their editor. Believe it or not, these are students and teachers, yoked together like friends. Those that Ammons hath joined together, let no man put asunder!

"The Nickelodeon" got its start on the brittle, elusive tappings of D. R. Fosso, a dictionary's delight. What the poet calls "arrangements of words" require the reader to play the game with him, to follow the twists and turns of epithets and epitaphs, gratuitous gratuities, pretzel petroglyphics. Meaning is "Subtle down/To where the worm/Of intellect/Turns out." Increasingly, Fosso's poems are opening up, including an occasional lyric flight--mingled in willows and winter sweet-gum bough.

Doug Abrams, who can write a good line with the best of 'em when he chooses to, is not afraid to take on the world as a penetrating, striding "I." In a shimmer of language his voice is essentially romantic: "I hope to turn again to Bushwacher Falls,/the lichen on trees like pencils." "I will uproot rain," he promises, "and carry it holy to stream." And Abrams has already learned one lesson from his teacher, Ammons: his supplications will "not yield into easy combination." Abrams, like Fosso, moves toward greater clarity and revelatory vision.

The honesty and harshness of Horace Crump is magnificent. Here is a poet completely without pretense, who tells it straight: "When that cold wind/Starts to bitin' ya rump,/You have a way/Of forgetting/Those pretty blossoms/And plums/Of Summer." The irony of the poem is quick as truth. In many of Crump's poems he returns to the self, where insecurity and disgust and all the frailties of the human being are reduced to the absolute: "I carry no promises--/Only me."

Another poet with his head out of the clouds is Clifford Robinson, whose funny poem "Imitation" tells about being mistaken for a basketball star. Robinson's reaction is cool! He takes on the world as if he were the star! Nobody ruffles him--folks on the campus, deans, "even a black lady" and gives them back what they asked for. Until, finally, he must get a little confused himself: "I'm not 'Skip'/I'm Clef I mean Cliff."

The poems of John York are fantasy trips, wild and zany, with sudden asides, "Last night I . . . wondered why am I loving no one." He uses for his materials what's at hand--the post office, passing friends, the perceptions of life in community, and turns them into nightmares and dreams in which he longs to be rescued by a small, dark girl who takes him, not to the familiar campus, but "to her castle."

Three Wake Forest faculty members contribute to the fifth "Nickelodeon": Elizabeth Phillips has a quick, severe look at death which keeps coming back like the image of the face which the victim and the poet want to say "No" to death. Michael Roman documents the necessity for reacting to truth, to the worst truth, death:

everyone pulls over to a full stop,
bending baffled ear to baffling heart.

Roman knows that though the body may be adequate to the condition, may go through the necessary, perfunctory motions of life, the mind goes slack, cannot verbalize its response. At best then, we must stop, acknowledge the unthinkable with "baffled ear." Roman returns in the most recent issue with another poem, "Slow Motion Explosion." With the same easy mastery of a two-line stanza, he discovers "a transparent sanity" in the meticulous order of space until it explodes into "smooth disintegration." The reader may take it for a metaphor of the poet's own method; at least Roman seems to have the energy to make art out of "a terrible comfort."

In a poem which I sense but do not completely understand, "Images from the Evening News," Dillon Johnston perhaps recalls having seen on TV the skeletal bodies of a mother and child, one of those now familiar scenes from Asia. What is recognizable, familiar, and like us about that picture is beyond the picture, the depth of humanity "which we cannot show you." It is at the level of the heart that we must identify with the human beings so distant from our lives. The mother's empty breasts, the gaping mouth, the bony child "can bear no likeness" to the fattened, fed and cared for physical presences of most Americans.

Bill Hinman's turn of wit in two modest and charming untitled poems lead to the harsher, deeper, and more vulnerable voice of John Carter in "The Thin Man's Winter Gall." (Put Hinman and Carter side by side and you'll see why John is so grudging.) Carter's technical gifts, his wit, and his motions disguise a deeper talent which we must hope is irrepressible.

Even at this writing new editions of "The Nickelodeon" are selling like magic in the English office; and readers have reason to expect that the flow of poems from old and new sources will continue, as diverse, exhilarating, and changing as the sands of Corsons Inlet. In addition to being a lot of fun, "The Nickelodeon" could indeed be making literary history.

Emily Wilson, gratefully

THE SONG OF SEMBLANCE OR THE SEMBLANCE OF A SONG

I wake in my simulated morning and stretch
slow motion in the gelatin atmosphere (yawn)
gelatin, yes, agar-agar this, the brown
medium of my growth (I've really always
wanted to be cultured)

and through the
personal petri dish of my soul, my lovely
cultured soul, I hear the voice of one
crying in the operating room: Prepare ye
the way to the morgue:

BEHOLD, out of
whiteness, out of autopsy comes the
anonymous son of semblance whose veins
flicker no more with their neon burden
and whose styrofoam brain is now per-
manently stymied:

today I will sing semblance,
a variation of myself:

In the beginning was
the surd, and the surd was with semblance,
and of this omnific liason was brought forth
time, libido, and all manner of deities,
worlds, creatures and their progeny, all
loudly glorifying semblance, etc.

and after
evolution and eventually, the surd was made
flesh, although expressly not fleshy; the
surd was born of man's woe, woman who said
Be it unto me according to the surd, which
it was

but I was singing semblance, not surds,
although they too have their semblances:
O agar, O my soul, O me-oh-my, O Whitman, why?
I sing semblances of why, I sing

semblances of
song, semblances of life, semblances of birth,
semblances of death, semblances, more semblances
of love and hate, semblances of semblances,
semblances of semblances of semblances, semblances
of nothing, nothing ventured, nothing gained:

I
behold the spectacle of surdians (among them savants,
organists, retirees, waitresses, businessmen, and a
handful of sooth-and surdsayers)

I behold them the
citizens of Uni-earth (shortened colloquially to
Unearth), the disposable, freeze-dried planet, who
spend their time palliating their aerosol passions
and perversions (the various and sundry forms of
plutonic and neoplutonic love).

The more
industrious of these have attained the status of
Executive and Junior Executive Bacteria in the
bowels of a computer where they assist in the
computerized peristalsis of semblance:

the circuits
are singing categories, categories of semblance:
someone has dug up new strata of what could be
the semblance of an unknown civilization or even
a civilization of unknown semblance: proceed to
classify

sort out the evidence, the bones from the
bowls, the 5,253 year-old layer from the 5,107
year-old layer: the crucial differentiation: sort
out

the anthroids from the questionables, the vascular
from the nonvascular, the simple-minded from the hopeless,
the wounded from the dead, the alcoholics from the social
drinkers, the boys from the men, the blue collar from the
white collar, the white laundry from the colored, the
general from the specific, the meat from the vegetables
(each has a designated drawer in the refrigerator)

when in
doubt or boredom one can always turn to categories or
crossword puzzles, or listen to one's eyeballs creaking in
unison, left to right, creaking hard, cracking there upon
semblance: you will notice the resemblance of the
human brain to the design of defoliated trees,

both
having the general construction of cauliflower, flowers
of the caul: I walk through fields in a straw hat, where
rows of cauliflowers nestle next to each other thinking
photosynthesis, the practical philosophy of how to deal
with sunlight: I see

cauliflowers elsewhere in easychairs,
nestling in their homes beside their plastic potted palms,
smoking profusely while watching surdball games on the
television:

the crpwd in attendance howls from the screen,
a majestic rendition of the Star-Spangled Surd, an
impressive tautology in four-part atonality for rhythmically-
flushed toilets, people, 3 surd synthesizers, foghorns,
atomic noisemakers, toy typewriter and telephone.

Someone
wrote semblance on the sidewalk and ran away quickly: the
square is now occupied by a yogi contemplating the scribbled
semblance, smiling enigmatically while many people pass
around him wondering if this scribble passes for truth,
forsooth, a semblance of truth is all I want, and put it
in a paper bag to go- don't ask me how the cat got in
there.

Walking back with my grocery bag, back to where
my petri dish is being kept warm, I see the germs rolling
in the gutter, screaming guttural goldangits. I join them,
for a while, and am carried away with the dizzy lot on
down the gutter, squirming, singing in a semblance of
solidarity:

O, thou germane gutter
I now must leave thee.

(semblance of an ending)

Betsy Leach

Biking into the Wind

1

If writing
or anything making
love
gets like
biking
into the wind
for long

2

Admittedly
your legs benefit,
your balance is
challenged
a
spring
jacket
gives
you
sail
(with
some
angle)

3

it is, however, hard
when she blows head
on your forward motive
almost meets its match
(especially if your crank's bad
too much play
saps
your ablest
pumping)

4

what was freedom becomes
function: it is getting some
where you thrust for
home
initially
settling for anything
when
stiffness sets in (in) a life
you can build around always falling short
fallibility makes more sense or
have it your way new highwayman;
she's ready: remount.

Rollie Bauer

IRISH

To A. R. Ammons

Despite your opalescent squareblue glasses,
Your assertive wave of the glistening green,
Give up the bottle Alec, the suckling teat
That the tongue longs along the outer nodules.

Black on black, hair upon the mouth,
The lower lip a pink thrust of anger,
Blacks on browns, and blacks on blacks
With a white neck, despite the poles:

Communism may or may not be
Better than a drunken Irishman,
What's a capitalist to say?
Sell ya a Kennedy halve for a Yeats.

Honor the great.

Pete Bonnette

Before the Pain

Two souls
Groping in the dark
For hope.
We laugh, talk, and travel
To ageless zeniths
But when we return
To the darkness of what is
And not what we wish to be--
We crack
Spilling the tears of our souls
Into still another
Unwanted reality.

Horace Crump

Scattering Returns

In a word the world is
Everything rolled up as
Crocus, jonquil, tulip,
Purple, yellow, red bloom,
Points back in toward how just
Flower all singles out
Assimilation so.

D. R. Fosso

THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE EXASPERATION, DESPAIR, AND HOPE ENGENDERED BY
THE SEVENTH REVISION OF A SHORT POEM SIXTEEN YEARS OLD, WITH A PLEA FOR HELP,
ADDRESSED TO ARCHIE AMMONS, CRAFTSMAN, POET, Wake Forest University.

My God, Archie, this is Number Seven!
I had scarcely reached puberty at Number One.
How hard it is! Cut. Clip.
Insert. Connect. Craftsman, you must be
Trained for surgery. Do you
Accept small fees? Listen to my
Poem, please. (Catch the two-stroke
Beat.)

Craftsman

What I like in
Wood and stone,
There's no thin skin;
Nor are they prone
To verbalize
Or tyrannize
In any wise
When to my will
I bend them.

But what I rue
In womankind,
There's no true view;
Nor do I find
The easy tear,
The stricken stare
Less hard to bear
When from my heart
I send them.

The first stanza, Archie, I once thought passable;
It's only the next that's bothered me.
You'll see in a flash the trouble's simply
That incoherence must pull up its socks.
(Oh it's tough stuffing goosedown in a coin purse.)
Or maybe it's just I don't know well
How to handle things I don't believe.
(I don't believe in bending things
Or breaking them even. I just do it.)
Maybe like the poem the Poet needs revision--
A little sinew here, a little warmth, some heart,
Mind, some know-how. (Insert. Connect.)

Maybe by the eighth or ninth I'll make it.
One thing keeps me going's the notion
That back in a corner of my shady garden
Like a silver egg in tall grass
Is the right word, the end of the road,
The answer not exactly hiding just nestling

Low as if it knew that not being found
Would shelter its dreamy incandescence.
Maybe someday after earnest surgery--
No more cosmetic work: down to
Bone maybe deeper--I'll get that second
Stanza, hit it right on the head,
Clobber its preciosity.
Maybe you'd say "Throw out that stan-
za, boy; you ever succeed you're finished."
Maybe not. You've succeeded
And you're not finished.

There's certainly a problem, Archie. There's certainly
An egg, too, though sometimes I think
The goose that laid it won't have his down.
Stuffed in my purse. We all have eggs
I guess, some I'm afraid like those tiny
Capsules laid in the skin of the female
Implanted to frustrate conception, a sort of
Timed release affair to keep life from
Happening. O Boy Archie
I sure won't use my egg that way
If I can beat the power mower to it
There, in the tall grass, in the garden. I'll
Implant it you can bet your life but deeper than
Skin! I'll point the old nose skyward
Open everything up and swallow it
Raw. I might not even wait to
Crack the shell.

Lee Potter

February, 1975

T H E N I C K E L O D F O N

No. 12 March 17, 1975 Five Cappe Dien Coppers

Editor: A. R. Arnone
WPU

The wind
went tender
of a sudden
lost
January leanness.

We sat
on the porch
A mild winter
I said
False spring
she said.

The difference
sat between us.

From an Album

Grayed
house locked to the ground
children
stuck to their hoops and pony carts
Ladies stiff at the railing.

From the second floor
free white sailing wing
a curtain
trying to carry the house away.

On trying not to get too comfortable

Let's keep it tense
you hear
pull up the slack
with arguments
I can make you
jealous
doubtful.
should we
separate?
I can make you
one hell
of a scene
anything
so's not to be
taken for granted.

Come to see me

Accept this house.
It smells of onions
wet shoes and hair
that needs to be washed.
The wasps fly in
all summer, can't find
what they want to eat
and die on the floor.

You've not been here
for so long you'll
find me changed.
I wear a shawl in
the evenings, curse
god and sometimes
beat my fist on the wall

Poems by Isabel Zuber

I see branches at all angles
lane nubs acquainted intimately
with ice
they hide together
and name me
my talk is all forests
the peaks of the sugargum
the central limbs contorted
fragments
like pinnacles smoothing
into horizon
they have an easy
solitude
I can never push beyond

Doug Abrams

The Universe Devours its Young
The slightest cell takes apart
waste from staple, rips the whole
core in the process until remnants align
and rigidity
sets a separate law down; the rule
is identity, destruction, renaming:
no system leaves
decay in peace, any option
closes out stasis:
stalk or avoid,
pray or pray on,
gravel emerges where sediment
seeds animated rain,
boundaries shift according to
the basic context; so skin for a
cytologist is myth; one must
begin with identity, a king-on-the-hill logic,
once thrown rolls to the foot,
grass is tattered, waver counters
the rebalance of weight, settles in
on equilibrium;
corn indulged
to excess scarcely waits to be tasted;
harmony isn't lost, plant
drank diffused broth, a
ravaged creation, the corn sails by -
the universe eats, but that doesn't
matter, we're just passing through

Doug Abrams

Fancy Dreaming

So I went willingly
Never sensing the hill's height
Nor dread holding court,
Lording over all its lonely summitry.

There needs a climbing over time
To reach open-season on temerity,
To handle knowingly
Available annihilation.

I gave to the sceptered gun
A moment's being and saw
In sights it cancelled out,
Each long-shot, a hit or missing
Shadowed cast of possibility.

Naturally I missed the chance
To seize the night.
I walked the sentence of return
Unfired by regret.

What lasts out dream
Is the dark waking now:
How all this being so
Scares the hell into me.

Doyle Fosso

Images pass
quickly by doors
half opened.
Formulations
and dreams
sink back
in fuzzy
eider down.

San Petro

Sound

I love,
more than No-Good
Boyo loves dreaming fish
in rise and falling bay,
to anchor in your lilt-
ing waves.

Beans for You

Noting their lengths and weights
I counted the light
Girders brought
In support of
Substantial fog
On the road
My lady came.
None of them, nor their suns,
Equal to her glance.

First

Your bird's head testing sounds, movements,
I recognized you with a shock
As if seeing Monet's magpie
Black and white against the day. I
Hadh't thought to find you
Sitting across from me
In that day's snow fields,
Or any.
So we began:
With Rosses Point,
Drumcliff Church,
Blind Rafferty.

All three by Kendall Reid

Laud the Nickelodeon

Load the nickelodeon
Make it play
Make it pay
Te Deum
laudamus
Lord have mercy on us--
and Archie

Elizabeth Phillips

A Record

"Stand up
H. Broadus Jones
So that we may see your face,
Your map."

The son pulled, patient, and
Irradicable
At his elbow.
H. Broadus Jones
Walked upward,
The restless eye of
A black robed gale.
A dozen hands
Tentatively touched at
Him, steady and brown
Against grey and white.

Stubborn,
H. Broadus Jones
Moved on
Alone, up the lectern
And turned, both hands
On the pine,
To the people

But,
The President stood ready, hovering
Above and over and behind
With the ribbon.
The crowd settled in
Wait.

The medal on,
H. Broadus Jones
Turned
And said, softly
Over the loud speaker,

"Step down?"

Beth Hammond

A bland poem
with a powerful line
or two
suggests
that one is not
chasing Milton
blindly
flailing device
besides
who has
that
kind of time
these days?

Rollie Bauer

Doppler

the stringing spectrum knows
light in context: waves limit
shore as well as the beach
binds flow,
the speech of water changes
dimensions: rock foam
to drought ebb -
this last month busy rains seeped
over most obstacles here,
but Stone Mountain due south
bears its aridity,
running out;
I can imagine relative
calm, rays pull themselves apart -
the joints rattle like old men
carrying canes, hold residue of
body intact;

II

some forms of light stay centered
from birth, legitimate or otherwise, but
the long lines move as upon
vertical rungs, in time can undermine
the whole process; though after the
years I wonder if it remembers
the source or cause;
dying stars flash with more interest,
coming hard to conclude, flushed,
pooped out, weary as a June bug that flies
itself to insanity or death on a string -
and other stars, swollen like ticks
till intestines pour up their jaws,
hose a spray of sudden light;

III

take conception for instance, hierarchy is
inevitable, cells shift alignment,
egalitarian genetics (mixing gametes for
brain matter) can't resolve the inequality-
feet down, head up, the symmetry completes itself
but if fingernail transfer
accepts diversity, pecking order, the point is
already made

IV

the space where thought ends and act
dominates wobbles on time, the distant markings
unravel, junctions strain like cheese cloth,
obscuring image at only the greatest clarity

Doug Abrams

Untitled

When I was fourteen
On a nice day
In her bright kitchen
I caught my mother
Beside herself.

She stood there with a
Long Distance voice
In her hand until
I couldn't see her face,
crumpled and torn
Into gaping
Pieces
Of helplessness.

She felt for me
And held me
Until we rocked
With long, big jerks.

Edith's mother was dead
And Edith had forgotten
To be my mother.

Beth Hammond

One Thing and Another

It is one
thing to know
one thing and
another thing to
know another thing.

A. R. Ammons

#16 9 April '75

five pussy penes

Ed: A. R. Ammons
WFU

Being and Not
(a small fable)

Once long ago
when the earth was rounder than it is today
and spun like a marble in the best pocket of time,
there lived two small creatures of existence-
one was named Being, the other was Not.
And one fine spring morning
when the sun was shining
and the breeze was cool
and everything was just about as real as it had ever been,
Being and Not sat down together as friends
on a piece of green clover
and began to talk.
And they talked as friends often do
about this
and that
and nothing in particular;
and as the dew melted
and their conversation came to an end
they decided to divide up all the ams and ises of the world
and go on along their separate ways.
They took turns choosing
and each one picked the things he wanted most.
Being got the trees
the clouds
the birds
the wind;
he got color
and song
and the simpler portions of imagination;
he got rivers and mountains
and light from the moon;
and he was happy.
But no happier than Not
who also got all the things he'd ever wanted.
For he got unicorns
and dragons
and all the elves and trolls and pixies, whome he loved;
he got the very highest, farthest, deepest portions
of imagination;
he got wishes and dreams
and ghosts
and magic.
And before long everything that ever was
belonged to Being
or to Not-
except for one last thing.
It was a small thing,
but it was something they both wanted.
So they decided to flip a coin-
heads it went to Being,
tails it went to Not.
It came up heads.
And here we are,

I Remember

being little
and sitting on

a creek sized bridge
across a creek

eating crackers
and telling my

self I was hav
ing a picnic

Grant Me Deliverance

she
talks
like
a
cup
of
hard
peas
poured
on
a
porcelain
floor

Double Haiku Love, Sort Of

Awkward pauses filled
with awkward poses: I just
can't handle love at

first

sight.

My feelings are broiled
lobster tails but my words
out liver and beets.

Poems by Clint McCown

Sun Stone

There is no more
to be seen
than meets the eye

though eyes can see
so little
they are met by.

The light your black
gravity
holds in still form

dances green and
violet
in weightless storm,

the distant sun
even now
your distant home.

Headstrong into fog,
raising the ante-
cedent risks racing
the arterial course;
dipping under for
breathing space
cresting in brilliant
indistinction:
sighting ghosts becoming
coming and going
transmigrations near
to hand;
(by my hand)
transgression of precaution
quickenning the blood.

Today's fire blankets
the top log front
and rear; light and heat,
flame's envelope,
bulging, about to seal
the top must leave
a ragged edge to burn
burning the center out:
heat radiates
against the grain
of necessary draft.

Atonement

Who's to pay for smashing my
toy California parking meter
(sixty minutes of ticking for
one nickle) windows broken,
red flay showing violation?

Planting

On Good Friday
there were haloes
circling the feet
of wandering Jew;
legend overcome
by sighting
radix luminous:
no more is due
to undo the curse
misspoken, holy
name blasphemed
by holy name;
earth received, gave
place and lodging.
Centuries' wound
this day redeemed.

Willful damage (the hammer's
the clue). The cost: things
cost the way the world is now
and ever has been waging labor
without end, consequence of
pledges made and broken (cost
for this) I judge in terms of
your resources, one dollar.

Pay what is owed to the order
of things: give what it asks,
it cannot ask for more and can
be bought, made your toy; break
it, inquire within for motive,
cost's hidden intentionality:

Not restitution but remedy, so
to make whole again the rupture
in being father and son, which
cost is infinite and unitary,
both pay the one price: so let
there be recess, remedial time
unlike any other time (not the
world's counting time). Take
your own time to pay and mine.

April 18, 1975

Old Nick's Knick-Knacks

The Dead Lake - Revisited

I could have cried when I stood on the edge
 Of the lake again;
 And maybe I will in some moment
 When I am completely alone,
 When the world is thrown back into the call
 Of low Autumn,
 When the lapse of each present season is shoveled
 Into split second pictures which blur direction
 And solidify with each new sleep.

It was all too fast,
 Like words coming out beneath eyes that did not seem to match them.
 The lake was filled with the murk of winter,
 Of winters that came thundering in on black, webbed talons
 Beneath eyes that stared out of it in the backwater reeds.
 They said things of passing;
 They spoke forthcomings.

They uttered nothing.
 I threw rocks at them;
 I threw sticks.
 I threw pitiful objects that bounced away.
 I gave what I had to hold the dam below
 Instead of damming the stream above.
 I stood midway,
 Conscious of unconsciousness,
 Wording out my restitutions,
 Continually prostrating all propositions
 On restoration.

But the dead lake did not move.
 And I know without seeing that it still does not move.
 The jungle grows from the branches downward,
 From the edges inward,
 With eyes and lips low
 To pull me closer,
 Even back again, until
 In laughter dead,
 It shall swallow even me.

M. Pate

the German shepherd, curled on
 the snow in the
 shadow of a bush, raises his
 head when I tap a window,
 and I release my breath
 as I see his in the late moonlight

John York



Concentration

when you are really skiing,
 you stop thinking about the fall.
 when you are really riding
 you aren't worrying about the stall.
 when you are really screwing
 you don't hear the husband in the hall,
 when you are really wondering,
 Then you're nowhere at all.

San Petro

Still Being

There when within is absent need,
 A presence full of wanting so,
 Heed how night yields wholly,
 Filling into day its easing register of rue,
 A grace, not balance, a poise about.

Composition places this and that
 Holding as it were such bounds.

Containment is limitedly desirable:
 For instance always has its way
 Toward blocking out assertion.

Only displacing silence grows
 All articulation as it is.

Composure moves with stillness
 Sensing whatever stays unstaying;
 I do not mean by this
 The death I do not know
 But very likely there's a likeness there.

D. R. Fosso

The Poetry Professor's Closing Remarks

I now heard a trampling over my head,
and somebody calling through the hole
with a loud voice in the English tongue,
If there be any body below let them
speak.

Gulliver's Travels

Fall off a few times to see it won't kill you.

Sphere

1

I drew broad lines with chalk held lengthwise
so everyone can see the arrow

ascending to the source, to the bower
and bed, crossed by a symmetrical

descent, another arrow, this the fall
out of bed into hacking trouble:

the ball: the timing, anyway, is just
perfect, it's lunch time and the first-spring-sky

is blue except for three metallic points
and their lush exhausts expanding in white

rings to partial then total erasure:
the eye would make those arcs come full circle:

back from lunch I thumb a National
Geographic, come upon Michel Siffre,

down a hundred-foot shaft in Midnight Cave,
Texas, sweeping guano of vanished bats:

he sleeps in a blue nylon tent, he says,
to keep the vastness off him: well, say I,

2.

high time to lower the shoulder, let fly,
chip the old block, hammer all conviction

to cinders: start inconspicuous-like
at the four corners, then to floor and ceiling:

how nice and handy for emergencies
I have this ten-pound sledge: to step

out, swing from the heels as Tribble Hall falls
about my office, and I step back in:

get a bald eagle to lend his talons
and give me a lift out of everywhere

I've been: or a ghost of the near extinct.
dirigible to loft me where it reads:

food, fuel, divine accommodations:
lo, the eagle slow floating! the long oblong

balloon, lighter than air, larger than life:
borne up for a sky dive, the office

drops off, plummets to the nearest exit,
to the surface, to the starting line

3

of the Yadkin River Raft Race: join in
everyone, it's the proper levity

that matters: got in the swim: anything
unsinkable is eligible:

I mean, inflatable sofas will do,
reclinable upon four-posters, or one

of those portable commodes I've seen
around will do just fine: with wherewithall

from rummage sales, Goodwill, the Baptist Church,
it seems we're housed for the occasion,

properly dressed, and headed in the right
direction: listen for the starter's gun:

bang: we're off: time for an invocation:
(now, students, we may begin: go back to

where we started, put it together, make
it stick: the answer is in the question:

class dismissed): O proud paraphernalia!
the ups and downs of lolling bouyancy

4

our mothers leave us: their old wash basins,
a porcelain tub, sinks, a trunk, one guy

is doing fine on a maple dresser:
its mirror splashes light: another's gone

under: a U-Haul trailer is holding
its own, trailing far upriver to

a dry wash that many times had saved
Los Angeles, meanwhile desert lizard

preserve to a boy of five: the place where
once he walked too far and saw grey canvas

hung on poles: a stripped mattress: smudgy
magazine covers and a coffee cup:

brush, comb, a pair of rust-pitted scissors:
a nutcracker, brass like his grandfather's:

stared till he thought he heard someone coming:
ran in the white sand, sneakers squeaking:

and later he wanted to know: the rain?
the water over all those things, clothes, magazines?

5

at sixteen, Colorado: the prospects
of an abandoned silver mine: crawlspace

up a slippery chute: how long? ten minutes,
maybe: for shards, a horse shoe: nothing to speak of:

pushing thirty, my luck's improved: at least
I'm in the race, the office holding up,

water-line steady at the window sill:
fancy myself a safe kindly Noah

satisfied with his adrift flotilla:
not a vessel wide enough for riot,

or trim enough for rage, pure and simple:
a once-in-a-lifetime view of deluge!

(students, I am tempted to reconvene)
in wearying rain two weeks ago fell

Silcan Bridge now just ahead of us:
three cars went over before anyone knew:

for a second wheels spun in the slickness,
the cars arced in contact still with prior

6

intention: I'm a New Yorker, used to
bad traffic: Bear Mountain to Sheepshead Bay:

sun on the Palisades: at the Battery
I sat at the bow gaffing for unseen

debris: a log struck, knocked the motor up:
tankers: we had no lights: then, under way,

the Verrazano, impossible loops
of light with nothing slung from them,

even years later: it's easier now,
in with the rubble on a makeshift raft:

cast-off in his office, the now humbled
master of his trade plugs leaks, pumps seepage:

so the portentous moment is not these,
but everything we owned splayed on the ground

of a cotton factory, somewhere in the South:
when I was eight the U-Haul just gave out:

seven times coast to coast, no piece
looked whole or in reach of recognition:

7

dislodged, toppling: strange children lobbing stones:
though somehow there was enough to squabble

over by the time they split: I sorted
the pictures no one wanted to file them

away: what I need, of course, is a map
of North Carolina: does the Yadkin

flow into Lake Lure? 1945:
a shaky, wiry flier saved from war

to figure in the Baby Boom, relaxed
in the Blue Ridge, his mission accomplished:

I've one snapshot in mind: an army raft:
his obvious expectations: his wife

letting her hand go into cold contact
with the water, imposes pattern,

emergence from a crux, form slackening
in its own wake, riddled space, spaciousness

motioning, the eye opened to the limit:
what is impossible is known for certain:

8

join the navy and see the world! begin
our tour in Ankara, Turkey: every

spring the mountains fling flood on the city:
when I was there it was announced on

the radio at three in the morning: O.K.
if you have a radio and are awake

at three in the morning: by noon, households
lay piecemeal in the sun to dry: the day

before I left, Lütfi brought a copper bowl,
not beautiful, but ample in what it held:

that night, bags packed, I threw it in the river:
upright, riding light downriver, out of sight:

(in conclusion, students, for your final
examination: step up, get out, hop in,

take stock: be it marble collection, stacked
cards, felt pennants from the 48 states:

I hold you responsible: enjoy your
vacation: I'll be here when you get back).

Michael Roman

Coronation: A Baroque Tribute
To Elizabeth Phillips

Imagine the scene: A Tiepolo ceiling
Horrent with clouds of buff and Arcadian blue.
The communion of saints, looking oddly like a
Departmental meeting, sit on their cumulus
Pillows, dressed in the colours of colleges
They endured: their robes are a mannerist dream,
Their faces, flushed with claret and beatitude,
Show the degrees of divine tenure. Suitably
Bearded, the new Jehovah (by some Shorter
Called, though thought by many to be taller than most)
Beams, and his double-knits glow with reflected light.
In the middle, flicking ash from celestial
Cigarette, she sits, amazed to be in a place
She never believed in, but enjoying herself.
Her robes are of gules and azure, gold and black.
Carter, gaunt Greco in rubicund company,
Does awful reverence, and round the starry throne
Finches and swallows in jubilant rapture skin.
Plump putti -- six small mustached Mosses -- descend,
Their chubby arms faint with the weight of the crown,
Which, butterfingerly, they drop: it floats, stately
As poetry, down to the silvered head, there rests
At a rakish angle. She laughs, and, twinkling,
"Thanks," intones, "I do deserve it, don't I?"
All angel-academe agrees she does.

Edward Lobb

The Idea of Order
At Spruce Pine

O you gray grammarians,
Why do you cough in your fur-lined sleeves?
Attend her gusty cachinnations:
In pumpkin corduroy she will sass Longinus.

The schedule, mailboxes, cinderblock,
The Harbrace chart -- we grabble in grids;
Through the dominion of rectangles
She traces tipsy arabesques.

In Reynolda, under the plastic ferns,
Plump cats snooze on orlon shag;
Through the pine woods deep in the mountains,
Blue foxes dance all night long.

John Carter

Your Fame

They announced it in the newspapers
 your fame
 and your name walked through everybody's
 evening meal
 While I wondered what it would mean
 to me
 so I came to ask.
 But found you already cold.

Congratulations, I said, you're looking fine.

But you seemed to have misplaced my name in
 your fame:

no word.

How absurd to remember the beer we drank
 in the good old days
 last Saturday night:

not a nod.

How odd all the cards letters flowers showers of praise
 and you
 with so many friends:
 so it ends.

Maybe I'll see you later, I said.

After while, crocodile
 cry those tears over beers
 Life's a game
 gives you fame
 sends you friends
 then it ends:
 so it ends.

Evelyn West

I cherished the compassed
 arc between two points,
 life and art forming alternate mirrors,
 brittle earth and distant stars,
 a Janus face, body and cell,
 an event and it's memory,
 the script and play, quotient and product,
 purchase and coin, dress and mannequin,
 till I realized I seek
 process not substance,
 images swirling against the glass
 taunting my world
 with theirs.

Yet mine is a real
 of distinctness (though not clarity)
 their's security from the possibility of action,

Progress

the holly leaves
 reach into
 a
 wind spun off
 the stairwell
 compass the calm
 eye and
 settle down
 one flight lower

Doug Abrams

reflection as an end.
 there all seems to merge but doesn't.
 here all does but seems not to.

I long for a completed arc
 (their image but mine also),
 to movement an anchor,
 to vessel cryptic voices through
 a patchwork sea,
 that points may converge
 and interchange
 and the compass spin
 on its axis.

David English

susan

she wore jeans so often
 that i remember most the afternoons of
 silk and nylon. she would stand in my room
 and never let tomorrow past the door;
 i would look at the gentle swells below
 the red and white print: her legs were never
 right until the late afternoon light fell on them.
 then i'd hold her while jim and buckwheat threw a baseball outside
 and asked the window what was holding me up.

once, when the sky was a wash of dark wine,
 we spent a night in the high
 jump pit, our bodies crushed together
 between the edgeless tears of foam rubber:
 somehow my hand found an old brown teddy bear
 that when we wound up, simply sat there.

kissing her was discovering she had
 kissed few times before - it was unwrapping
 presents and feeling the glow, touched
 by eagerness, and the hesitancy with
 which she placed her hands upon me.

pennsylvania has her now and i
 try not to wonder about it: now i take pictures
 of the sunsets.

God isn't as easy: poems are harder to write.
 when the old music leaves me empty,
 i reach to the shelf, wind the bear up...
 its all very simple

s. birchall duin

Trees on the Day Before Spring

I.

the earth moves into the long phalanges,
 the stark phalanges that have been
 for months bone pyres of the sky,
 the sky that was ashen visaged

II.

it butts its waxing antlers against
 the sun, rushing equinoctial: it
 relinquishes the austere crosshatch
 of sycamore filaments overlapping oak;

Betsy Leach

I try to pay no attention
 to the best:
 It seems that
 I assimilate more
 than I need
 unconsciously,
 and the secret
 seems to lie in
 lazy looking water with
 a strong undertow.

Sam Petro

Dismissed

Even so indelible credulity
 Comes all out
 In the wash.
 Slated surrenders to attacks of
 Cleanliness,
 Erasure blanking
 Credo; empire commandeered,
 Thought to be
 In exile where
 Oblivion is all
 Headquartered now.

Magisterial hit-man rubs out
 Chalked assurances
 Gone ghost;
 Felt sweep swipes thus,
 Arming again
 Black opacity,
 The polished dressing down.
 No intonation
 Lingers out lament
 At detonating rainbows
 Smithereened.

Flat black
 Vacuity resumes
 Its abnegating occupation;
 Lecture done for
 Lunch begun.

D.R. Fosso